

## Mech Touch 6391

### Chapter 6391 The Beginning of the Greatest Product Reveal

The venue slowly filled up. The enormous exhibition space of the Palace of Mechanical Marvels had been used to present all sorts of new and interesting mech products over the years.

This time was different. People held much higher expectations this time. The identity and reputation of the lead designer along with the increasingly more optimistic hints dropped by the Red Association generated far more hopes and expectations from the growing crowd than usual!

The more sensitive and farsighted people even had a sense that history could be made here today. The mechers invested way too much in this product reveal for it to unveil a relatively mundane mech design.

Ves already had a reputation for releasing good mech designs. The sales of the second-class Fey Fianna and the Ultimatum models had plateaued after months of rising momentum, but that did not take away from the fact that they had remained persistent sellers since their release!

Anyone with a brain could figure out that whatever product Ves intended to release had to be significantly more exciting than the two aforementioned bestsellers.

Few people had a good idea what Ves planned to unveil. Could it be the first living mech at the first-class level? Many people expected him to enter the first-class mech market, but even that should not warrant such attention from the Red Association.

Many of the guests freely shared their guesses with each other. Pretty much no one who did not receive advance warning failed to make the correct guess.

No matter what kind of product they thought that Ves would introduce, none of them ever imagined that he would break the limitations of genetic aptitude and open up the possibility of piloting mechs to the wider population!

Back on New Constantinople VIII, Gloriana and her children had made sure to clear their schedules so that they could witness the presentation in their living rooms.

"Where is papa?" Andraste asked as she cuddled with Clixie.

"Miaow miaow." The Rubarthan Sentinel Cat casually licked her paws while luxuriating in her treatment.

"Your father will appear soon." Gloriana said as she comfortably sat next to Aurelia. "Much will change today. All of our lives will change forever. Your father will become a celebrated mech designer throughout history, and his bloodline shall become more exalted than ever. As his children, the three of you will notice that everyone will treat you differently from today onwards. As the children of the man who made mechs available to everyone, you will inherit a part of his honor. Many doors will open to you, but people will also expect more from the children of a great man. If you want to live up to your father's growing reputation, then nothing less than excellence is satisfactory."

The children all nodded and took her lesson to heart. They had all heard many times that they were special and more powerful than other children. They constantly studied hard in order to please their parents and earn their praise.

While the wife and children of Ves eagerly awaited for the presentation to begin, the main exhibition hall steadily filled up. More and more people occupied the large amount of stands.

Floating boxes paneled with wood and carved with intricate details floated above the heads of everyone else and welcomed a large variety of VIP guests.

Lieutenant-Commander Astrid Jameson joined a gathering of other fleetier officers in a large box reserved for their company. They sat down on the plush couches and partook in the glasses of wine that was specially imported from a distant vineyard located close to Bridgehead One.

Now that the vineyard had lost its main customer, it had quickly shifted its sales to Yernstall, which benefited the locals and visitors of the central star node.

"Captain Reze." The lieutenant-commander as well as grandmaster-protector spoke. "Thank you for accepting my invitation. We may hail from different fleets, but we still serve the same organization. I hope that despite our differences in opinion, we can hold an equitable exchange with each other. You have spent much more time in the company of the Devil Tongue than any other mecher. You have even contributed to the legendary attempt to transform the Dominion of Man into the first known god ship. Our understanding of this mysterious Carmine System is admittedly bare, so we expect you to fill in the gaps and provide additional insights based on your understanding of its

inventor. In return..."

"I expect you to speed up the conclusion of the inquiry into the Babylon Excavator's performance during her last battle and offer a vote of support in my next promotion evaluation. The fleet captain plainly stated his demand.

"That is... acceptable, as long as the information you share is commensurate with the value of our concessions."

"You shall find no issue with my insights. Captain Reze smirked. "I may not be able to discuss the details of the Carmine System as we have been unable to track its development within the design labs of the Tarrasque, but I can tell you much about the perspective of its inventor."

As the fleeters chatted with each other, other VIPs continued to enter the private boxes. As Yernstall was one of the most developed star systems in human-occupied space, it was not that difficult for the established movers and shakers to attend this event.

Senior Mech Designers, Master Mech Designers and a whole host of bureaucrats, businessmen, scientists and off-duty military officers continued to arrive at the Palace of Mechanical Marvels and take their seats above the stands.

The gathering of so many humans produced a sense of anticipation that caused the surrounding air to become more charged.

It was as if they were all waiting for an announcement that would change their lives one way or another.

Ves, still dressed in his carmine-colored ensemble, stood alongside his fellow collaborators and watched how the entire exhibition hall almost became full.

He grew reassured when he saw all of the security measures in place. What was visible only represented the tip of the iceberg, but he nonetheless became happy to see the Red Association mobilizing plenty of mechs inside as well as outside.

More importantly, the Dark Zephyr continued to remain active but out of sight in the vicinity. Ves could feel the edge of the ace light skirmisher's Saint Kingdom scanning the surroundings for any threats.

As Ves thought about how many benefits his latest invention would bring, he almost took the initiative to ask whether Saint Tusa was willing to integrate the Carmine System into his Dark Zephyr.

Ves quickly squashed this thought a few seconds later. He already asked Tusa once before, and the answer would likely remain the same.

As much as Tusa liked the benefits enjoyed by Venerable Jannzi Larkinson and others, his very nature deterred him to the idea of shackling himself to a single mech for the

rest of his career.

While he most certainly loved the Dark Zephyr and developed a fantastic relationship with his only high-ranking mech, he did not harbor a strong desire to make their bond permanent and unbreakable.

Accidents could always happen. No human was immortal, and the same applied to mechs.

Light mechs happened to get completely wrecked at a significantly higher rate than larger and more massive machines. If the worst ever happened to the Dark Zephyr, then Saint Tusa wanted to be sure he could resume his career after getting a replacement

machine.

The ace pilot harbored no disrespect towards the Dark Zephyr. It was just part of the job. The living mech himself was mature enough to know that his only partner would not be willing to retire after suffering a major mishap.

This brief consideration reminded Ves that the Carmine System was not a must-have. The stronger the mech pilot, the less they gained from it, as the importance of genetic aptitude had dropped for high-ranking mech pilots.

While Ves speculated that the Carmine System might make it easier for peak ace pilots to traverse the road to no return and successfully break through, he never dared to voice this theory due to how outrageous it sounded.

Ves needed to gather hard proof before he could make this claim in public. This was a

problem because he did not know any peak ace pilots who were willing to bet on his completely new tech that had never been tested at such a high level.

"Don't think too much, Ves." Saint Tusa transmitted over a private short-ranged channel. "Just stick with the basics today. I can feel that your head is filled with all kinds of wild ideas, but let's not overwhelm everyone with them, okay? We should take this one step at a time. It is not too late to introduce other versions in the future." The ace pilot's words inserted much-needed clarity in Ves' mind. "You're right. I was getting ahead of myself. The public can only process so many shocks at a time."

A countdown appeared. Ves only had two minutes left before he was scheduled to

appear on the big stage.

"Meow meow."

"Yeah, you better follow me as well, just in case. If nothing happens, then at least you will

be a fixture in all of the historical images that will be used to commemorate this day." "Do you think that there is a Star Designer attending this product reveal?" Lord Richard Brownstone carefully inquired.

"I truly don't know." Ves shrugged. "The security services keep this kind of information away from the public. I do not sense anyone excessively powerful in the crowd, but that does not necessarily disprove this possibility. If the Star Designer wanted to reveal his or her attendance, then that will happen sooner or later."

Ves briefly checked the conditions of his four collaborators and saw nothing obviously amiss with them. They were all elite first-raters, so they were quite capable of enduring the huge amount of stress of hosting a presentation in front of so many people.

To be honest, today was mostly about Ves and his work. The contributions of the other Senior Mech Designers were nowhere near as important, and they all knew it. They only possessed minor speaking roles this time.

This increased the burden on Ves. He tried his best to suppress any nervous tendencies and use his condition to make himself sharp and increase his presence. There was no need for Ves to resort to the cheap tricks he used in the old days. There was no need to borrow any glows or borrow the power of his design spirits.

He was already confident enough in his own work that he chose to approach this like a mech designer.

[And now, please welcome the mech designer that you have all been waiting for! Give a good welcome to Professor Ves Larkinson!]

Ves plastered a smile on his face and entered into view of the entire audience. The

exhibition hall already became noisy as many people clapped and hollered at his arrival."

He ignored all of the noises and eventually managed to move to the center. A bright spotlight shone from above while the surroundings started to dim.

Ves raised a single palm, causing everyone to fall silent.

"Good day, citizens of red humanity. What I am about to introduce to you all will subvert

many of the rules about mechs that you have taken for granted. Please be patient and

allow me to introduce the greater context of my works. Let us start with the beginning of the Age of Mechs."

A projection appeared that displayed an excellent reproduction of an old museum piece. "Mechs have existed before the Age of Mechs, Our precursors have painstakingly developed many of the essential technologies that still form the basic framework of modern mechs today. What allowed mechs to stand out from other war machines was

two reasons. First, they evoked a sense of romance and heroism for those who yearn to pilot them. Second, their neural interface appears perfectly adapted to enable mech pilots to control their mechs directly with their minds. For over four centuries of continuous development, this has always remained constant..."

#### Chapter 6392 The Glory of the Mech Industry

Though not everyone appreciated the history lesson, Ves believed it was important to frame his work as the confluence of successive developments in mech design over the generations.

He already knew for certain that his Carmine System would serve as a major historical turning point, so he might as well play up this angle.

"Since the start of the Age of Mechs, many different mech designers have contributed to the overall development of mechs over time." Ves continued to address his audience, many of whom were probably watching at their homes or workplaces. "Countless mech designers have managed to produce minor feats of brilliance that have resulted in incremental improvements or an expansion in the variety of mechs that can be made. These small gains are almost unnoticeable when we view them in isolation, but can reach a considerable scale when conglomerated."

Many mech designers who had grown old enough to be realistic about their limited prospects identified with this description. These mech designers may be good enough to earn a comfortable living, but they were not brilliant enough to invent anything big.

Despite this shortcoming, they still ended up with fulfilling careers as they knew that their mech designs and technological applications played a small role in broadening or deepening the foundation of mech design.

This was the strength of a cohesive, united mech industry under the leadership and the supervision of the Mech Trade Association.

"Yet there are also other visionaries who have succeeded in changing the landscape of mechs with a single invention." Ves continued to speak as he grew increasingly more enthused about his speech. "This happens much less frequently, but the rich and expensive mech industry always offers room

for more ambitious, capable and far-sighted mech designers that have pursued ideas that others considered impractical until it appeared in their faces"

He had been the victim of this as well in the past. Hopefully, he would not be met with as much skepticism once he made his explosive announcement.

"Let us briefly go over the major advancements throughout the history of mechs." Ves said as a massive projection appeared above his head that displayed an image of what he mentioned. "Mech archetypes. Destroyer weapons. Beast mechs. Aquatic mechs. First-class multipurpose mechs. More extensive miniaturization, Smart metal mechs. Support link technology. Transphasic mechs. Hyper mechs. This is just a small and insignificant selection of successful technological advancements that defined their generations as soon as they became available or reached mass adoption."

The display of key technologies that improved mechs for the better inspired a lot of people.

Mech designers felt proud of what their predecessors managed to accomplish in the past.

Mech pilots felt grateful to the diligent and hard-working mech designers who developed all of these amazing techs.

Technology bound them all together. The universality of the technologies they worked with allowed them to form a large community that united people from every corner of human society.

The mech industry was different from every other industry because of the unprecedented unity and collective will of all of its participants.

"Through the efforts of many diligent and hard-working mech designers and other professionals, we have steadily managed to solve many problems that proved insurmountable in the past. Only twenty years ago, no one would have taken you seriously if you claimed that a mech can traverse interstellar distances without a carrier ship. Now, enough mechs are equipped with minidrives and transphasic flight systems that it has become an attainable if expensive product. Just think how much much has changed due to the introduction of a new technological paradigm. Before humans got their hands on phasewater, only god mechs possessed the capability to travel faster-than-light and travel to other star systems on an independent basis."

That was true. Mechs had always become inseparable to carriers from the beginning.

Unless mechs were produced on the same planet and assigned to defend it against extraterrestrial visitors, all machines had to be ferried around by large and cumbersome mechs.

The availability of phasewater technology finally liberated mechs from this limitation, at least in theory.

In practice, it did not make economic sense to equip minidrives to every mech. Still, turning an impossibility into a possibility was already a feat worthy of celebration! "I am proud of what my predecessors and contemporaries have accomplished so far." Ves spoke in an uplifting tone. He straightened his back even further and allowed his flowing coat to billow behind his back. "With every passing generation, the mech industry has produced both incremental and revolutionary results. Both types of gains go hand-in-hand, as the former often builds up to the latter and vice versa. Yet..."

He deliberately made his posture more subdued. Above his head, the giant projection that previously displayed the many successes of the mech industry started to portray different footage.

A lot of people's expressions grew troubled as they witnessed the all-too-familiar sights of 10-year old children who just received the results of their genetic aptitude tests.

In the vast majority of the cases, the children suffered their first major setback. Their dreams of becoming heroic mech pilots crumbled into pieces as the reality of their inadequate aptitudes dealt them a fatal blow!

In a society that worshiped mechs and idolized mech pilots, the revelation that you could never feasibly pilot a real mech was enough to plunge teenagers into years-long depression!

Fortunately, these instances happened so frequently that every state and society had their own way of healing these broken children.

Many of the people in the exhibition hall and watching by remote had gone through their own ordeals. As they continued to grow older and wiser, they eventually came to accept their lot and found ways to enjoy pursuits and passions.

Yet... the younger they were, the more they still harbored regrets and longing about the future they could have lived in. What if a quirk of their biologies just happened to twitch to the point where their genetic aptitudes improved?

"I can feel your pain and regret at being denied a chance to pilot a mech." Ves said as he gently pressed his palm on his chest. "I feel it as well. Back when I was a teenager myself, I often cursed my fate for being born in a military family, yet unable to continue its greatest traditions. I was immature back then, so I often blamed others for my own inadequacies and bad luck. It was quite common back then for school children to gather around and curse the stupid and lazy mech designers for failing to expand the restrictions imposed by our reliance on neural interface technology."

What he just said was part of the childhood of every norm. Many people adopted familiar and reminiscing faces as they recalled their own reactions during this phase of their

teenage years.

The giant projection changed to display a simplified wireframe model of a neural

interface.

Ves began to pace back and forth, with Lucky silently floating behind his back. "It is surprising how little neural interface technology has improved over the centuries. Yes, I am aware that it has experienced many incremental and a handful of revolutionary improvements over the generations, but progress has been much slower in this field than elsewhere. Certain people attribute this to the high entry barriers of this field. Others blame the extensive restrictions that the MTA and RA have imposed on this sensitive and dangerous tech. Whatever the case, whatever improvements that neural interfaces have received during the entire span of the Age of Mechs, they are so subtle and refined that most people can't notice the difference!"

That elicited a bit of laughter, but of the cynical variety. Ves gave voice to an incredibly common and much-shared complaint. Both laymen and mech insiders decried the excessive caution and lack of daring experimentation in the field of neural interface

technology.

Still, there were plenty of people who reluctantly agreed why the mechers preferred to err on the side of caution. A lot of human experimentation related to neural interfaces tended to produce an unusually high rate of brain damage and fatal accidents among the

test pilots. Messing around with neural interfaces was no different from poking a metal rod into a mech pilot's brain before stirring it around!

"I am not here to question this policy." Ves said as he spread his arms. "For over four centuries, neural interfaces have simplified our control of mechs and allow potentates to control them as their second bodies. This is an amazing benefit and one that has served as the most foundational technology of mechs. Nobody can imagine a mech that lacks this very crucial tech. We even go as far as calling them by different labels such as battle bots and manually controlled mechanical constructs."

The more clever and insightful people among his massive audience already started to have a clue what Ves was working towards.

The very notion of it sounded so insane and impossible that they could never bring themselves to admit that it could actually be true.

Yet... their hopes and dreams compelled them to listen and find out whether Ves truly produced a miracle.

Ves could easily sense the rising tension and excitement in the air. The thoughts of more and more people all directed towards Ves, causing him to have the illusion that he would have been able to harvest an immense amount of faith energy if he possessed the power

of a true god!

Alas, Ves was still too far removed from that stage, so he could only allow all of that highly potent energy go to waste.

"Let me be frank with you all." He said in an earnest if somewhat apologetic tone. "I am not a neural interface specialist. My design philosophy has little to do with them. I am not here to announce a much-desired breakthrough in the field of neural interfaces." That disappointed a lot of people, but they did not entirely lose hope.

Ves wouldn't have talked so long about neural interfaces if he did not have a purpose in

mind.

He began to smile. "In fact, I never thought about expanding the eligibility of who can pilot a mech. To understand what I mean, let me start at the mech that brought me here

in front of you today. This... is the Bastion."

The giant projection changed to display a slightly outdated quasi-first-class expert space

knight.

There was still much about the large and imposing machine that attracted the admiration of mech designers and other mech connoisseurs.

Ves had poured a lot of love and passion into the design and creation of the third order

living mech.

It did not start out as a masterwork mech, but gradually evolved into one as the vestiges of the Bastion's previous incarnation fed the machine with power.

"The story of the Bastion is not simple. Her pilot, Venerable Jannzi Larkinson, previously

piloted another living space knight of my own design that unfortunately fell in battle." Another projection briefly showed the moment where the Shield of Samar melted from the potent acid sprayed by the Skorpion Kommando.

"The downfall of the Shield of Samar was especially traumatic to Venerable Jannzi." Ves solemnly explained. "You see, the expert pilot developed a deep bond with her living mech. Her machine reciprocated these deep feelings because she was alive enough to experience the same thoughts and emotions. Over numerous years, Jannzi and the Shield of Samar developed a bond that transcended physical boundaries. I dare say that it had turned into an extraordinary phenomenon that truly existed despite the lack of empirical proof. It was due to this that Jannzi took the loss of the Shield of Samar much harder than most mech pilots. She was one of those mech pilots who fell in love with a mech at first sight and refused to pilot another mech."

Such pilots were rare, but not unheard of. Mech pilots tended to be emotional people,

and they often developed 'unhealthy' relationships with their mechs, especially if they had not been assigned to other mechs over their careers.

Most mech organizations tended to treat it as a mental disorder. It was wrong for mech pilots to make their mechs out to be more than just lumps of metal that happened to be

good at fighting. Ves used to think so as well, but he was glad he never tried to 'cure' Jannzi.

"I did not know it at the time, but my desire to reconstruct a more modern and powerful

version of the Shield of Samar, which also included that extraordinary bond between mech pilot and living mech, changed everything."

More and more people leaned forward and sat on the edge of their seats in order to

listen to every word.

Though Ves still hadn't said anything that truly excited them, the energy in the

exhibition hall kept rising without end.

People looked at the appearance of the Bastion and tried to guess what it contained that led to the presentation today. What revolutionary tech did Ves put inside this extraordinary machine that attracted the strong support of the Red Association? The projection slowly formed a series of thick letters that formed a fairly long and

convoluted phase. [EMPOWERED BLOOD SHARING SYSTEM]

"This was my initial attempt to fill the void in Venerable Jannzi's heart."

Chapter 6393 Fusion Between Technology and Mysticism

Back in the expeditionary fleet, Venerable Jannzi Larkinson looked increasingly more conflicted as Ves paraded her traumatic story to all of red humanity. She crossed her arms and fidgeted in her seat as her eccentric cousin continued to publicize details that she would rather keep under wraps.

"Are you okay, Jannzi?" Venerable Joshua asked with concern. "Ves is airing your story to everyone"

Their relationship with each other may have ended a long time ago, but that did not stop Joshua from caring about his ex-girlfriend's wellbeing.

"I am fine." She said, though her shaking voice made it soon she was anything but okay. "Truly. I expected this to happen. Ves came up to me and asked for permission to do this in advance. As much as I feel embarrassed to publicize my close relationships with the Shield of Samar and the Bastion, I ultimately thought that I shouldn't feel ashamed for feeling this way. Instead, I want to serve as a role model to others and show that forming a permanent relationship with another mech is fantastic."

The other expert pilots sitting around accepted this story. Perhaps Jannzi may have underestimated the impact that this would have on her psyche, but she had multiple reasons to allow this to happen.

"Are you thinking about getting into politics?" Venerable Dise guessed. "I just figured out that presenting your name and story to everyone is a great way to kickstart your career in public service."

Jannzi smirked back. "Maybe. I do not intend to burden myself with greater

responsibilities before I have advanced to ace pilot, but once I have become as strong as Tusa, who knows. I want to make a much greater difference to the clan and to the rest of our society than now. Ves is rapidly being groomed to take charge, but I do not think it is entirely wise to let him run the Red Collective. He needs to be confronted by opposition who actually knows him and understands how he thinks. I am not claiming that I can be a part of that effort, but if the opportunity arises....I will not refuse the offer."

Everyone in the pilot lounge fell silent for a moment.

"You do know that you still need to rely on Ves to update your Bastion, right? Doesn't it seem counterproductive for you to push his buttons while also begging him to improve your living mech?"

Jannzi smiled and shook her head. "Ves will not let his feelings get in the way of his professionalism. That is one trait that I admire about him. He takes his responsibilities as a mech designer seriously."

While Jannzi dreamed about what she might be doing in the future, Ves continued with his presentation back on La Reina.

Everyone stared at the bold letters that spelled out the initial name of the system that led to this presentation.

"I imagine that you are confused about what 'Empowered Blood Sharing System' exactly means." Ves said with a smile. "It is not that complicated, actually. It is quite a literal description of what I have done to revive and evolve the intimate relationship between Venerable Jannzi and her living mech."

The main projection changed to show the Bastion, before it gradually shifted into a semi-transparent image that showed a part of its interior architecture.

Of course, Ves was not stupid enough to publicize the sensitive and confidential details of a high-end asset of the Larkinson Clan to the public. He had made sure to simplify, erase and obscure a lot of important design elements.

What he truly wanted to illustrate with this image was the first implementation of the Empowered Blood Sharing System.

"After getting struck by inspiration, I combined my personal understanding of living mechs, the unique bond that Venerable Jannzi shared with her previous expert mech and my understanding of the extraordinary properties of human blood to form a biomechanical blood circulation system that runs throughout the interior of the mech in a seemingly unexplainable fashion."

Many mech designers and engineers struggled to understand what they were seeing. The projection may have obscured many details about the design of the Bastion, but it displayed the actual Empowered Blood Sharing System in perfect clarity.

Yet what they saw still did not conform to any existing theoretical frameworks! Even the biotech experts couldn't make heads or tails out of this odd system. There was no functional purpose to

allowing human blood to touch different components! "Confused?" Ves grinned. "That is because the purely material components of the Empowered Blood Sharing System only tells half of the story. The real magic takes place in a different realm. This is not an application of hyper technology. It is an application of E-technology years before the start of the Age of Dawn. In cultivation science, blood is far more than a liquid that circulates oxygen and other nutrients from one part of the body to another. It carried a core part of our spirit and vitality. This is why ancient cultivators liked to use blood to conduct all kinds of gruesome rituals and ceremonies." That caused parts of his audience to immediately feel more repelled at what Ves had created. All of this was beginning to sound icky!

"Don't worry." Ves attempted to reassure the more sensitive members of his audience, with mixed success. "Blood is an ingredient. It can be used for both good and ill. I like to think that my application of the Empowered Blood Sharing System falls in the former category. What you need to know is that I succeeded in what I have set out to do. When Venerable Jannzi interfaced with the Bastion for the first time, she successfully established an intimate connection with her new living mech that exists beyond the man-machine connection. Since her blood combined with cloned blood based on her DNA forms the bridge of this novel connection, I decided to call it the Blood Pact. Both pilot and living mech have formed a sacred pact to work side by side to accomplish their common goals. This bond is as strong as the promise of a high-ranking mech pilot."

As Ves spoke, a simulation of a pilot entered the cockpit and interfaced with the Bastion.

Though Ves had heavily processed the visuals, people could still see zoomed-in clips of needles poking through Jannzi's piloting suit and beginning to connect her blood circulation with that of her living mech!

Not everyone could observe this process taking place without feeling disgusted or horrified. Stuff like this usually happened in horror dramas where the supernatural had overtaken a society of mechs!

Still, what compelled people to pay attention was the visualization of the two bonds that tied the mech pilot and living mech together.

"These two glowing lines symbolically represent the simultaneous connections that Jannzi maintains with her Bastion when she is piloting her living mech. Ves said in a factual tone. "The bright white line stands for the man-machine connection that is established through the old and familiar neural interface. The bright red line represents the new Blood Pact formed between the two. Normally, both are active at the same time whenever Venerable Jannzi pilots her Bastion."

The critical moment of his presentation had arrived. Ves deliberately paused to increase the tension. His grin grew wider as he leaned forward.

"Now, when I spontaneously came up with the Empowered Blood Sharing System, I never had a complete grasp of what it was capable of. It was only when Venerable Jannzi experienced its effects for herself that she came up to me to share a shocking theory. Her Blood Pact bound her so tightly to the Bastion that she guessed that she could rely on it to effectively control her own living mech!"

Many people did not fully comprehend his shocking revelation. They already started to get lost when Ves started to ramble about blood, and now he had made a claim that was so shocking that they literally could not bring themselves to believe it was true! Ves continued to press forward. "In order to test her hypothesis, we conducted secret experiments where she attempted to pilot her Bastion with her Empowered Blood Sharing System active but her neural interface offline. The results shocked us both. It worked! She actually managed to pilot her Bastion almost as smoothly as if she was controlling it through a neural interface! I paid close attention to the readings and I am absolutely certain that I cut her off from the neural interface. These are the very first instances where a mech pilot is effectively able to control her mech through a system that does not rely on connecting the human brain to a pure machine!" The crowd started to generate a lot of gasps and other noise, but Ves knew that this would not be convincing enough to win over the skeptics.

"I broke through the rank of Senior Mech Designer after I comprehended the amazing

potential and implications of my accidental invention." Ves said with a smile. "I decided right then and there that I will attempt to realize my design philosophy by fleshing out this new control system and turning it into a mature design application that is suitable for mass adoption. In the months that followed, I continued to theorize and experiment. with my new invention. I soon decided to refer to it as the Carmine System to make it

easier for everyone."

That added a lot more credibility to Ves' outlandish statements. It was not a coincidence that the Red Association maintained a heavy presence during this product reveal. Ves was able to take advantage of their stellar credibility to make his story believable!

"I continued to explore this fantastic new design application. After months of design work, I applied a slightly more refined application of my Carmine System to a high-tier expert mech called the Blood Star Mark II"

The projection displayed a substantially different expert space knight. Unlike the Bastion, the Blood Star Mark II possessed a clear offensive focus.

"Those who took the initiative to investigate the background of this expert mech should already notice a glaring discrepancy. The pilot, my grandfather, was a former expert pilot who sustained serious brain damage during a war in the previous age. This crippling injury has devastated him. He lost the ability to interface with his expert mech or any other mech. This resulted in a cascade of failures as his inability to pilot mechs means that he cannot fulfill his promises that he has made as a loyal soldier of the Bright Republic. Most of you should be aware of the consequences of that. My grandfather became crippled and had no choice to retire from service... until I completed the Blood

Star Mark II."

The projection changed to show a partial cross-section of the cockpit.

"As you can see, the Blood Star Mark II is special in that it does not come with a neural interface at all. I did not bother to include it because I bet that my grandfather can regain his willpower by interfacing with his new expert mech with the Carmine System. Since the records show that my grandfather has since regained his power as an expert pilot and fought in many battles at the frontlines, my attempts have clearly succeeded." Many people started to breathe heavier and faster. The Carmine System sounded more and more promising!

"Now, I am cognizant that two success cases does not necessarily prove the value of the Carmine System to the general audience. What if it only works for high-ranking mech pilots? This is where the Red Association has proven to be helpful. In order to verify that my Carmine System can also benefit other people, the mechers have conducted many secret tests with prototype Carmine mechs. The results that I am about to show you may be shocking to the extreme, but the mechers completely stand by their studies." Everyone grew silent as they did not want to miss a word of what Ves would say next! "I don't think many of you would like to read through thousands of pages of dense and boring academic texts, so let me summarize the results. The Blood Pact created with

the help of the Carmine System has proven to be an effective alternate control system for mechs. Low-ranking mech pilots can not only use it to control their mechs by itself, but can also combine it with the man-machine connection generated by the neural interface to raise their effective genetic aptitude, up to a limit."

That certainly aroused the attention of existing mech pilots, but Ves had more to say.

"What is more interesting is when we put norms with no history of mech piloting in the cockpits of the prototype mechs. When they successfully forge their Blood Pacts with their lifelong bound Carmine mechs, they have proven to be able to control their mechs in very similar ways, though with much less skill due to their lack of professional piloting

training."

Ves had dumped such a shocking revelation to his massive audience that the truth of his

words had yet to sink into their minds!

Chapter 6394 Genetic Aptitude Tyranny

After a lot of buildup, Ves finally dumped the most crucial information to the public.

Ves finally felt unburdened. He had carried this shocking and subversive secret for so long that it had begun to gnaw on his mind. He had heard many stories from many people who dreamed about piloting mechs, but never had a chance to earn the right to do so due to factors outside of their control.

Around 96.5 percent of the population did not possess the right genetic aptitude to pilot mechs with the use of a neural interface.

In reality, the proportion of people who lacked the chance to make a career out of piloting mechs was probably at least a percentage point higher. Different states labeled people with E, D or even C-grade genetic aptitude as inferior manpower stock. These unlucky potentates faced an uphill battle if they wanted to enroll in a mech academy and learn the skills needed to pilot mechs in a professional capacity.

The extreme inequality and inequity generated by the random and uncontrollable development of this biological factor even gained its own name.

Genetic aptitude tyranny.

Most people learned in school that human civilization had come under the rule of a hegemony between the Mech Trade Association and the Common Fleet Alliance.

This may be correct, but humans during the Age of Mechs also fell under the sway of a different reign.

Although it sounded dramatic, genetic aptitude tyranny aptly described the cruel and oppressive rule that had shackled the futures of far too many unfortunate people.

A tyrant was defined as an absolute ruler who was unconstrained by law. A tyrant did what he wanted without regard for fairness, precedent or the common good. A tyrant all-too-easily resorted to repression and cruelty to reinforce his rule.

Genetic aptitude was not a person, but certain scholars and philosophers regarded it as the cruelest and most inequitable tyrant of the last few centuries.

In a society where piloting mechs had become a supreme honor, it was incredibly cruel for genetic aptitude to deprive so many people of a chance to take up this profession!

The tyranny of genetic aptitude remained uncaring of the efforts of people to qualify themselves to piloting mechs.

Neither augmentations, training, education, praying or any other activity could significantly raise the chance of a child developing the right genetic aptitude.

There was slight proof that certain bloodlines or designer baby formulas may be able to increase this probability by a small margin, but the differences were so slight that it failed to change the overall situation!

Despite the efforts of countless mech designers and other scientists, no one had managed to break the genetic aptitude tyranny.

Not even the vaunted Star Designers managed to solve this impossible problem. This was a huge disappointment as they had made a name for themselves for introducing new possibilities!

In other words, even the high-and-mighty Star Designers had surrendered to its tyrannical reign.

It had proven to be too strong and stubborn to get rid of! It was so persistent that it even survived the transition to the Age of Dawn and held sway over red humanity like nothing had changed!

People had already adopted the assumption that they would continue to fall under the yoke of genetic aptitude tyranny for many centuries more.

Hardly anyone who attended this mysterious product reveal expected to hear that a Senior Mech Designer of all people managed to obliterate this tyrannical reign all at once!

It was too fast!

It was too sudden!

It was too unexpected!

As people began to process the bold but substantiated claim, the masses began to react with great emotions!

The noise levels rose dramatically as people couldn't help but cheer, cast doubt on the results or accuse Ves of being a liar!

"I never thought... I never thought that I would have a chance to pilot a real mech in my lifetime. I can't contain my emotions anymore..."

"Hey dad, I can pilot mechs now! There's no reason to send me to a regular school now. Please let me attend mech academy instead!"

"THIS CAN'T BE TRUE! TELL ME THAT HE IS LYING! NO ONE CAN INVENT A SINGLE GADGET THAT MAKES NEURAL INTERFACES COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY. IT CAN'T BE. THIS IS NOT TRUE!"

"WHY WAIT SO LONG UNTIL YOU DEVELOP THIS 'CARMINE SYSTEM'?! WHY COULDN'T YOU HAVE INVENTED IT 40 YEARS SOONER?! I WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BECOME A MECH PILOT INSTEAD OF RESIGNING MYSELF TO DESIGNING MECHS INSTEAD!"

"Hey, what do the numbers and graphs in the projected documents mean? I don't understand this science stuff at all! Does it really prove that norms can pilot mechs for

real?"

"If these numbers and descriptions are credible, then... they do. There are hardly any exceptions. The success rate is close to 100 percent for healthy human individuals. The only people who can't pilot mechs with the Carmine Systems are those with severe

health problems, rare allergies, extreme genetic modifications and severe mental incapacities. Not everyone can pilot these new Carmine mechs, but as long as you are healthy and fit, there is no chance for you to fail."

People continued to embrace or question the claims made by Ves with so much intensity that he was not able to continue his presentation!

Ves knew that the reaction to his key claims would result in upheaval, so he already took this into account. He merely stood still and smiled in order to convey his confidence in

his own creation.

He made sure that the main projection displayed the most important pages of research reports related to testing the Carmine System. Many industry professionals recognized the formatting, typesetting and typical dry academic writing style standardized by the MTA and the RA.

The mechers always imposed high demands on science related to mechs. They took the adage that extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof seriously and conducted an extensive amount of testing and stress-testing to determine once and for all that the Carmine System could function as a legitimate control system for mechs!

As reluctant as the mechers may be to acknowledge that this weird and esoteric mechanism could allow mech pilots to control their machines without a clearly identifiable channel for data transmissions, the scientists and engineers were professional enough to acknowledge that it existed in the face of overwhelming proof. Although the mechers were very careful to state in their research reports that they still did not understand the underlying mechanisms of the Carmine System, they had tentatively deemed it safe to use.

The only way they would give this new control system a strong seal of approval was if numerous longitudinal studies had confirmed that it was safe to use over the long term. Many sharp and skeptical mech designers and skeptics understood the implications of lack of longitudinal studies. They knew that it was not characteristic for the RA to rush out a radical new invention without spending the time to thoroughly determine whether the Carmine System did not gradually kill or cripple its users over a span of years and decades.

Yet when they thought about the continued proliferation of bad news in the past half year, they understood a little better why the mechers prematurely introduced this

invention.

When they looked and listened at the masses reacting to this announcement with overwhelming enthusiasm, they recognized that people had regained a lot of hope and optimism for the future!

"Clever." Lieutenant-Commander Astrid Jameson twitched her mouth as she witnessed the uncivilized hollering taking place below her private box. "The mechers have obtained a treasure. I may have my fair share of disagreements with the Devil Tongue, but I cannot deny that he is the best innovator of his generation. This Carmine System will change everything. Mechs will occupy an even greater share of our society now that theoretically anyone can pilot mechs. Even fleters such as you and I can pilot one according to the conclusions of these research reports."

Captain Zonrad Reze responded with a smug grin. "I recognized Professor Larkinson's brilliance long ago. I have always maintained the stance that we should maintain good relations with him despite the fact that he is a mech designer and is close to the mechers. A man with his combination of talents, courage, and knowledge can do much for the mech industry, as evidenced by his Carmine System, but he can mean much for other sectors as well. I strongly support initiatives to increase our cooperation with him. The Red Association may have hooked their claws into him first, but he is not the sort of person who likes to fall under the yoke of others. If we can offer him an alternative channel for resources, tech and military support, you will find that he is quite amenable to collaboration. What is crucial is that we treat him as an equal partner instead of adopting our typical superior attitude against a 'space peasant! That is a good way to alienate the only person so far that can create a Carmine dreadnought."

The suggestions made by Sigrund normally would have fallen flat among the fleters, but that changed now that Ves had produced an invention that would cement his place in

the history of mech design.

To see the Red Association and the rest of the mech community receive such an amazing benefit from the Devil Tongue caused the fleeters to grow intensely jealous! Astrid sighed. "There are a surprising amount of brilliant and unconventional talents among the people we pejoratively refer to as space peasants. For so long, our CFA has remained far too insular and closed off to the potential of human society at large. After the Great Severing, our RF has taken steps to become more connected with grassroots society, but it is clear that we are not doing enough to tap into the strength of the masses. I shall talk to my ancestors about this subject and more. If we continue to stick too closely to our old traditions, I fear that we may ultimately get overtaken by the changes of the times."

"You better start sooner rather than later. Captain Zonrad Reze warned. "The release of Carmine mechs will spark such a massive change to our society that a lot less people will be able to maintain their interest in our warships. Unless the Red Association heavily restricts who is permitted to obtain and use Carmine mechs, the craze for mechs will become several times worse than before."

There were always winners and losers in a game. The fleeters who always competed against the mechers for supremacy had long struggled to gain the upper hand. Although the fleeters fielded far more battleships than their mecher counterparts, the lack of a warship that could fight against god mechs on an equal basis had always been one of their sources of pain.

Now that the Carmine System threatened to capture the adoration of 96.5 percent of

the population who previously did not possess the qualifications to pilot a mech, the Red Fleet's very existence had come into question!

"We have depended far too long on genetic aptitude tyranny to help preserve our place in human civilization." Astrid noted. "Now that it is on the verge of collapsing, I agree that we must adapt quickly so that our Red Fleet can still justify its existence as more and

more people prefer to play with mechs rather than warships."

"Only technology can save us, lieutenant-commander. The mech industry is much larger, more diverse and more innovative than the warship industry. No one can argue against this truth. I am not suggesting that we should liberalize everything and make warships available to the common man, but... we need to take measures to encourage the technological development of warships. Professor Larkinson has not spent any further time on developing his Carmine warship concept any further because we insisted on transferring the Dominion of Man away and conducting our own tests and experiments with her. If this is our response to every massive technological improvement, then we deserve to get beaten by the mechers."

Not just Astrid Jameson, but many other mid-level fleeter officers in the private box looked ashamed.

#### Chapter 6395 The Reality of Piloting Mechs

The noise levels finally started to subside after people gained a few minutes to process their emotions.

The reaction to the claims made by Ves and the proof provided by the Red Association subverted one of the most important pillars of the mech community and maybe even human civilization as a whole!

People continually struggled to believe that a hard rule that had remained invincible for over 400 years had suddenly collapsed because a Senior Mech Designer accidentally invented an alternate control system!

Although Ves had laid out his story and case in a clear and straight fashion, people had become so invested in the prior status quo that they couldn't overcome the inertia of their old beliefs!

The optimism among the people did not fade, but the cheers were steadily being overtaken by doubts and skepticism. Many individuals refused to believe that solving the problem posed by genetic aptitude could be this easy. There had to be a trick or caveat that made the reality less than stellar.

Ves finally raised his palm, causing most people in the massive exhibition hall to gradually stop their chatter.

No matter what, Ves had amply earned the right to speak today.

"I am aware that my delivery of the facts so far has failed to fully satisfy you all. Before I proceed with introducing the commercial mechs that incorporate the groundbreaking Carmine System, I am open to answering certain questions about my design application. Those of you who are attending this product reveal in person should have just gained access to a special submission portal in your comms or cranial implants. Once you have submitted your questions, the mechers who manage this system will select the most relevant and appropriate of them. If they have selected your question, you will be given the opportunity to stand up and voice your question to me in person."

A short pause ensued before a lot of people began to visit the virtual portal in question! Millions of people activated their comms or directly accessed the portal through their cranial implants.

They were not necessarily motivated by the need to have their questions answered. Many people already recognized that this event would become an integral part of red humanity's historical record.

Many children born in the future would probably see a full replay of this product reveal. Those lucky and astute enough to earn a chance to ask their questions to the inventor of the Carmine System would definitely be able to impart their names and faces onto all of those impressionable students!

This may even turn into a supreme glory that guaranteed the prosperity of a family or

clan for many generations to come!

Naturally, the portal instantly welcomed an influx of millions of eager people!

No matter whether they were mech designers, mech pilots, artists, students or even children, everyone had a chance to submit a question!

Unfortunately, the people who had heard the explosive news and tuned into the broadcast of the product reveal discovered to their disappointment that they did not have access to this submission portal!

"This is unfair!"

"We deserve to have our questions answered as well!"

Unfortunately for all of the people witnessing this historic announcement from afar, life wasn't fair.

Ves personally believed in the sanctity of person-to-person interaction. An event as important as this should not devolve into a remote exchange.

He patiently waited for the people to think up a good question and submit it. The RA already employed a bunch of AIs to rapidly filter out all of the stupid and invalid questions. The ones that

remained got passed on to a large team of human mech designers, who carefully weighed the value of the questions before composing a shortlist.

Ves silently received this list and immediately began to mark a few questions out that he did not wish to address.

Once he concluded the process, he clapped his hands and kicked off the Q&A session. "Alright! Many of you have submitted interesting and insightful questions. While many of you will eventually be able to obtain the answers yourself once we have published the full documentation and made our new products available, there are certain inquiries that deserve greater attention. Let us start with Mech Colonel Grecia Avars of the Rubarthan Pact."

A spotlight shone down on a private box. The front wall of the box turned translucent, giving the public a clear view of the Rubarthan mech pilots and mech officers that had reserved the VIP seats.

A middle-aged woman wearing a uniform steadily rose up from her seat and took a few steps forward. She kept her back straight and placed her arms behind her back. She did not hide the pride and satisfaction of being the first person to be able to ask a question to the famous Professor Larkinson!

"On behalf of the military of the Rubarthan Pact and the Red-Stained Throne, I am honored to be able to present my inquiry to you." The woman spoke with confidence and professionalism. "My question is thus. Mechs have long imposed strict usage requirements that only permits a small minority of our population to make use of them. Your Carmine System threatens to upend this condition, especially if it is affordable

enough to facilitate mass adoption. Is it not too reckless to suddenly make this Carmine System of yours accessible to everyone? Many adults who have given up their dreams of piloting mechs have gone on to become productive mech designers, doctors, managers and factory workers. Are you not afraid that your disruptive invention will cause all of those workplaces to suffer manpower shortages as far too many individuals resign from their positions and attempt to rekindle their fantasies of becoming mech pilots?" Ves smiled in response to this predictable question.

"The Red Association has thought long and hard on the societal consequences of making my Carmine System available to everyone. I can assure you that the mechers are on top of this situation. I cannot share with you all of the measures that they have prepared, but I can tell you a few generalities. First, the Carmine System may offer people a different means to pilot a mech, but that does not mean they can do so with enough skill to match professional mech pilots. It still takes at least a few years of dedicated training to pilot a basic Carmine mech without becoming a liability

on the battlefield. It takes at least 10 years of full-time training and education for Carmine mech pilots to equal conventional mech pilots in skill and combat ability."

"That will not deter the repressed mech fanatics that have always lamented their missed opportunities and finally have a chance to revive their dreams." Colonel Avares stated. "Now that piloting mechs has become available to everyone, who would want to work in a shop, a farm or a cargo hauler? Our society has glamorized the allure of mechs for many years, and now we are about to suffer for it. The pool of mech designers will definitely suffer a massive drain. It is not a secret that far too many mech designers only entered the mech industry because they cannot move past their desire to pilot mechs. They regard the acts of designing and producing mechs as an inferior substitute to their true passion, at least initially. Professor Larkinson, are you not afraid of causing mech designers to become so scarce that your profession is on the verge of extinction?" Ves couldn't help but laugh at these absurd scenarios. "Colonel, our society is made up of a wide variety of people. Not everyone is suitable to live the life of a soldier. There are potentates with the talent to pilot mechs, but they are never allowed to fight on the battlefield because they will freeze up and make mistakes. Such occurrences will happen much more frequently if you put intellectuals, musicians, politicians, lab technicians and other non-combatants in the cockpit. Just because you can pick up a firearm and shoot with it does not mean you have a right to become an infantry commando. The same applies to Carmine mechs."

"Does that mean the Red Association will restrict the right to pilot Carmine mechs to people who have completed certified training programs?"

"That is one of the measures that the Association intends to employ." Ves nodded. "Carmine mechs are similar to conventional mechs. They are weapons of war that have the capacity to inflict a large amount of damage. We cannot possibly hand them over to untrained and impulsive individuals who do not possess the discipline to pilot them with caution and respect for their destructive potential. Perhaps unqualified people will be permitted to fool around with undersized training mechs, but the RA intends to

regulate the use of combat-capable Carmine mechs more strictly."

"What if there are too many people who are patient enough to enroll into the training programs?"

Ves smiled. "There are still many other limitations. First, there are only a finite number of accredited mech academies that can set up those training programs. Only those who have sufficient money, talent, connections or other factors can earn a quota. Second, once these Carmine mech

pilots graduate with a valid diploma, they still need to obtain or get assigned to a mech. Do not forget that even the cheapest mech is unaffordable to ordinary citizens. If they cannot purchase a machine of their own, they will have to find employment with an existing mech organization, but there will be so many applicants that only the skilled and best-performing Carmine mech pilots will get hired."

That answer began to deflate the confidence and enthusiasm of a lot of people. The reality that Ves described with his words could very well take away their dream of

piloting mechs!

"That sounds as if piloting mechs will turn into a privilege that can only be enjoyed by a small majority. That is different from what we all imagined, professor." That was a valid complaint, but Ves merely crossed his arms.

"My Carmine System opens up new options, but I never claimed to create a utopia. We

are at war. The native aliens have overrun many star systems and killed a huge amount of soldiers. Our resources are becoming more strained and our mech pilots are dying off at a concerning rate. What I am able to do is give far more people a chance to become a mech pilot so that we are not overly reliant on the 3.5 percent of the population that possesses a suitable genetic aptitude. No matter what, everyone has a small chance to become a mech pilot, which is better than having no chance at all. It is up to the individuals to seek opportunities and work hard to prove that they have earned the right to pilot a precious machine."

That answer satisfied the Rubarthan colonel. "I agree with you, professor. Piloting mechs

should remain a privilege, not a right. No one is entitled to pilot a mech or Carmine mech. We do not have the resources to give everyone their own personal mechs." "Many states and star systems are currently under a state of martial law." Ves elaborated. "We cannot afford to allow Carmine mechs to be used for leisure and other frivolous activities. Every Carmine mech pilot that completed their training must be ready to ship out to the frontlines at any time. If you are not willing to use your newly obtained fighting and piloting skills to fight on behalf of red humanity, then you do not deserve to pilot a Carmine mech. Please consider carefully whether you are willing to abandon your peaceful lives and careers at the rear and subject yourself to the ravages of war. There is no shame in admitting your inability to cope with danger. There is a place for everyone in our society. We still need people to design our mechs, to transport our goods and to

operate our mining equipment."

This exchange successfully defused a lot of people's unrealistic fantasies of quitting their jobs so that they could pursue the life of a Carmine mech pilot.

Of course, it did not stop the true diehards from pursuing their obsessions, but at least the authorities had access to many solutions that would allow them to control this

situation!

Chapter 6396 The Optimism of Technological Progress

Dreams were dreams because they could be imagined by anyone.

Dreams were unconstrained to the limitations imposed by reality.

Dreams could rarely be fulfilled because those who imagined them lacked the ability to realize their unrealistic fantasies.

What Ves had just done was give his audience a harsh reminder that just because they could, did not necessarily mean they should.

Anyone with a basic grasp of economics and the dire state of red humanity would know that it was impossible for everyone to instantly quit their current jobs en masse and become Carmine mech pilots the next day.

The laws of supply and demands did not magically disappear due to the invention of the Carmine System.

The more people wanted to pilot a Carmine mechs, the more barriers they would have to overcome.

This was a dynamic process, so Ves expected that the amount of people who were willing to drop everything they had and dedicate themselves to piloting Carmine mechs would eventually reach a sustainable equilibrium point.

More people would get to pilot mechs. That was almost certain. Yet the increase shouldn't be dramatic enough to disrupt the functioning of society.

"Let us proceed with another question. Master Miriam El Misri, you have the word."

The spotlight shone on another private box. A female Master Mech Designer stood up and faced the public with a sagely demeanor.

"Professor Larkinson, when you have briefly described the mechanisms of your Carmine System, you described the Blood Pact as a sacred covenant between Carmine mech pilot. and Carmine mech. This has many implications. What will happen if either party perishes? Can a Carmine mech pilot form a new Blood Pact with another Carmine mech, or will he or she encounter hindrances that complicate this action?"

"Good question, Master El Misri." Ves said. "You have touched upon one of the harshest limitations of my new tech. The honest answer is that people can only form a Blood Pact with a Carmine mech once in their lives. There are few if any exceptions. I took the trouble to share the story of Venerable Jannzi Larkinson because that is the sort of dedication and commitment that every Carmine mech pilot must show to the machine that has given them a new future. Do not disrespect the Blood Pact. It is not a tool. It is a mutual promise between two life-long partners. It is a marriage that can never be annulled."

That generated another wave of disappointment among the audience. The limit of being able to form only one Blood Pact in a person's lifetime was a massive limitation!

The majority of mech pilots were accustomed to switching over to pilot other mechs on a semi-regular basis. They never fell under the sway of a restriction that would only permit them to pilot a single mech for the rest of their lives. The very thought frightened the pilots!

Master El Misri therefore represented the concerns of many people who previously held a lot of optimism towards the Carmine System.

"If this is the case, then if a Carmine mech pilot loses his or her Carmine mech, that person has no means to continue to fight as before?"

Ves nodded. "Yes. All of the time, money and missed opportunities that the pilot has spent to control his very own Carmine mech will go to waste as soon as the bonded machine is lost. This is a limitation of the current and past generations of the Carmine System. People who are interested in piloting Carmine mechs should take this limitation into account and make a careful choice on whether now is the right time for them to switch their careers."

"Your words imply that there may be remedies in the future."

"That is true." Ves smiled. "Technology opens many doors. Did we not live in a universe where only 3.5 percent of our population is capable of piloting mechs? That has turned into close to 100 percent due to my innovation. While my Carmine System comes with a heavy restriction, we should never rule out the possibility of subsequent advances. The Carmine mechs that I am about to unveil to you have incorporated a solution that partially mitigates the chance that Carmine mech pilots will be forced to retire once their machines shatter. In addition, more comprehensive solutions are being pursued." "Can you elaborate?"

"My direct disciple, Miss Alexa Streon, is working to develop living legacy mechs. While her concept is still in the initial stages, I see great promise in her endeavors. As long as she is able to progress her research far enough, I may be able to collaborate with her to develop a line of legacy Carmine mechs that form a cohesive collective identity. This should theoretically make it possible for a prospective Carmine mech pilot to form a Blood Pact with a dynasty of Carmine mechs as opposed to an individual living machine. The goal is to permit one Carmine mech pilot to be able to pilot multiple different Carmine mechs of the same generation."

This idea excited a lot of people!

There were many members and leaders of old and established family organizations who immediately recognized the value in this potential solution! They already began to look up Alexa Streon and thought about how they should invest in her research in order to secure first dibs on her so-called legacy mechs!

Master El Misri looked impressed. "That is an inspired proposal to lift the current limitations of your new design application. Since your direct discipline can contribute to a solution, other mech designers should be able to develop their own solutions." "Yes," Ves grinned. "This is the strength of the mech industry. There are so many mech designers among us that we have advanced the technological development of mechs at a high pace since the start of the Age of Mechs. The Carmine System is new and exciting, but it is also a young and underdeveloped piece of technology. I have no doubt that there are many of you who can take what I have created and develop your own improvements on top of my basic framework. However, before you get ready to license my Carmine mech designs at the first opportunity and begin to butcher my work, the consequences of making mistakes are as severe as mishandling neural interfaces. When the lives of real mech pilots are on the line, experiments related to the Carmine System can only be conducted under the supervision and approval of the Red Association." That deflated the eagerness of mech designers who already intended to sink their teeth into the Carmine System. The Red Association imposed many restrictions on any research related to neural interfaces. The mechers would probably treat the Carmine System just as seriously!

Even so, there should still be a chance. People with greater understanding of the Red Association knew that it would never completely prohibit research into this field entirely. The Carmine System was still too flawed and featured a lot of room for improvement. Every advancement in this area would further cement the supremacy of mechs over other combat platforms.

Ves proceeded to answer a few more questions. Not all of them warranted a lot of attention from him, but they dealt with topics that he had to address sooner or later. "According to your explanation, the Carmine System serves as an extension of your living mechs. Is it possible to integrate your Carmine System into a mech designed by others?" "No. It is completely useless if you replicate the material components of the Carmine System onto a more traditional mech. In order for a Carmine mech pilot to control a machine, he has to form a Blood Pact with the latter. This is categorically impossible if the machine in question is not alive in the style of my living mechs."

"If we are committed to piloting 1 Carmine mech for the rest of our lives, will we have to worry about our machine becoming outdated over several generations?" "No. A living mech is flexible enough to maintain its life even when it is damaged or upgraded. So long as the Carmine mech does not get completely disassembled or blown to pieces, you can rest assured that it will continue to serve as your steadfast partner as long as you take good care of it. The premise is that you or the organization that you work for is willing and able to invest in the maintenance and upgrades of your Carmine

mech."

After answering a few more relatively uncomplicated questions, Ves finally reached the

big one.

This one demanded his full attention due to the identity of the submitter, so Ves sharpened his mind and tried to be as attentive as possible.

"Please welcome the Nanolord, who has graciously decided to honor us all by attending

this product in person."

Everyone suddenly fell completely silent. Invoking the name of the famous Rubarthan

Star Designer had that effect.

This was one of the 14 Star Designers that continued to make massive contributions to the survival of red humanity!

Just as his title suggested, Myrwyn Jest had risen up to become the foremost authority on smart metal systems. He had been behind many advancements that benefited the development of all nanomachines. He was also the main reason why smart metal mechs still earned a place in the mech community.

As the spotlight shone on the human figure of the Nanolord, nothing unusual stood out. The Rubarthan Star Designer wore a resplendent white and blue coat that featured streaks of light, betraying the fact that it was completely made out of his own

nanomachines.

In fact, many people guessed that the Nanolord never bothered to go out with his real body anymore and just piloted a facsimile that was completely comprised of smart metal.

Whatever the case, the Nanolord earned everyone's full consideration no matter whether he was present in the flesh or piloting a smart metal puppet from a secret and

undisclosed location!

"Professor Larkinson. Let me begin by applauding you for solving a problem that has

vexed far too many of my colleagues. Your solution may only give us a starting point, but that is the most precious gift of all. Your capacity to innovate has not only met our expectations, but exceeded them by a large margin." The Nanolord spoke with a gravelly and masculine voice.

Ves made a brief bow. "I am pleased to receive your approval."

"I shall not take too much of everyone's time, so let me proceed by asking my question.

According to the data and the partial blueprints that you have put on display, the Carmine System consist of organic or biomechanical components. Is it possible to implement a purely non-organic version of your Carmine System, perhaps one that is composed entirely of metallic nanomachines?"

It figured that a Star Designer like the Nanolord would be interested in this angle. Ves carefully composed his words. "I have currently advanced my Carmine System to its second generation, but I have been unable to completely rid myself of this requirement. I have conducted experiments where I have successfully substituted the requirement of an exchange of blood into an exchange of an inorganic medium, but there are so many dangers, complications and exceptional circumstances that I cannot replicate it on a large scale. However, this single outcome is enough to prove the possibility of altering the Carmine System into other forms, which also includes non-organic ones. My time is limited and my capabilities are more so. I am not invested in this line of research, but the beauty of being a part of the mech industry is that there are so many more brilliant. minds that may be willing to pick up this mantle. Now that I am about to share my Carmine System and Carmine mechs to the public, any of you can improve upon my work, provided that you clear your experiments with the Red Association." The Nanolord imperiously nodded after receiving this answer.

"I shall study your work carefully and endeavor to relieve your Carmine mechs from this

impractical requirement. Much of the mech industry is not adequately prepared to blend conventional technology with biotechnology. We can significantly reduce this unwanted logistical burden by developing a version of your Carmine System that can be fabricated entirely with more standard industrial production machines."

"I agree, Your Excellency" Ves modestly replied. While he did not have a lot of hope that the Nanolord or anyone else would be able to

succeed in this effort, who knows what they were capable of. The mech industry was not short of creative and supremely intelligent minds.

"While you have been gracious enough to answer my initial question to the best of your

ability, I would like to take the opportunity to ask another question." The Nanolord did not back down yet. "Are you willing to engage with me further, Professor Larkinson?" Ves struggled to keep

his expression straight. This was not permissible under the rules. He did not have an opportunity to vet the Nanolord's second question. However, Ves had not become powerful enough to say no to a Star Designer in public.

"I am willing to extend more time to your unexpected request, but please be aware that I am restricted from sharing information that is currently deemed confidential." That sounded overly vague, but it gave Ves enough of an excuse to massage his answer.

"Very well. You have stated that you have currently developed the second generation of your Carmine System. Would you be willing to disclose your current research direction with regards to this subject? We wish to learn how you intend to improve the design application that you hope to realize your design philosophy with, and how confident you are in succeeding in your research."

That was an important question.

Ves actually was not quite sure how to answer this because he hadn't made up his mind

on his future direction!

Chapter 6397 Elemental Ambition

When the Star Designer from the Rubarthan Pact asked his next question, Ves

momentarily fell silent.

There was no way the Nanolord asked this question without reason. The clever True God must have noted the implications of Ves' earlier declaration of trying to realize his design philosophy by developing the Carmine System further.

Now that Ves had introduced a groundbreaking new alternate control system for mechs, public interest in it had immediately shot up to an astonishing height.

A lot of mech designers and scientists were already planning to obtain the blueprints and technical specifications of the Carmine System in order to tweak and improve its performance based on their own expertise.

Ves was never arrogant enough to claim that his work was perfect and that no one could make better versions. He was well aware of how much he did not know compared to the Master Mech Designers

and Star Designers that actually dominated the mech industry. However, there were certain areas that other people could not do. As far as Ves knew, few if any mech designers possessed the unique range of knowledge and skills that he accrued over his career. His persistence in blending classical mech design with cultivation science turned him into an oddball that was able to create a range of useful innovations because no one else had been in a position to do so in the past.

Otherwise, other mech designers would have come up with inventions such as design spirits, companion spirits, kinship networks and the Carmine System a long time ago! The technical complexity of these creations was not that high. The difficulty lay in gathering the right combination of conventional and unconventional knowledge. The inventor also had to possess the creativity to generate the right ideas and the persistence to pursue them when everyone else thought it could never work.

Ves felt a right to be proud of his inventions. Since he came up with them, there was no reason to think that he was inferior to others. Even if his Carmine System was rather crude and underdeveloped in many areas due to his lack of depth in biotechnology and other relevant disciplines, at least he managed to single-handedly open a brand new field in mech design!

Under the careful supervision of the Red Association, the study and development of the Carmine System was bound to become a dominant trend in the next few years!

The issue that Ves faced was how he could possibly further the development of the Carmine System in the face of this collective endeavor.

Perhaps mech designers would emerge that would make the Carmine System cheaper, simpler, safer or less dependent on organic components. There were so many different experts out there that they could improve the Carmine System in ways that Ves never thought of due to his limited perspective.

What improvement could Ves possibly bring to his great invention?

He thought back on his previous struggle to choose his future direction as a mech designer.

Before, he identified at least two potential opportunities to realize his design philosophy. The first was to continue to collaborate with Alexa Streon and successfully to combine her living legacy mechs with his Carmine System. Ves had no idea if the concept would even work, but it was still worth pursuing.

If he succeeded, he would effectively reduce the greatest limitation of the Carmine System and make it far more practical to use. No Carmine mech pilot would have to be afraid of being forced to retire after losing their only machine in battle.

Yet... did it have to be him to bring these dynastic Carmine mechs to life?

Perhaps he had felt more motivated to pursue this idea in the past, but his perspective had changed a lot since those times.

Now that he took on greater responsibilities and rose to a greater height, he understood that red humanity no longer required pure numbers in order to stop the native aliens. What his civilization truly needed was more high-end combat power.

If the enemy phase lords and phase whales could not be stopped, the Red War became as good as lost.

Ves always felt ambivalent about the Red Association's nebulous strategy on praying for the emergence of a few new god pilots.

While it may be true that the ascendance of these great heroes may be enough to change the status quo for the better, the probability of any successful breakthrough was so low that it was a complete gamble!

Any plan that relied on a gamble was unreliable to the extreme.

Ves hoped for the best, but also had to prepare for the worst.

The only way he could think of that could address red humanity's shortcoming of high-level combat power was to develop much stronger Carmine mechs that could somewhat plug the gaps.

Ves had no clear idea how much stronger his proposed elemental Carmine mechs could become, but he had a hunch that their blend of extraordinary power may produce a lot of surprises.

This should especially be the case if multiple different elements combined forces with each other!

A surge of confidence lifted up his mind. He gained a lot more certainty than before. Although he did not intend to give up on the idea of creating Carmine mech dynasties, he did not prioritize it as much as before.

If possible, he was even willing to allow Alexa Streon to solve this problem in his stead!

What truly stirred his passion was his increasingly more elaborate outlook on his elemental Carmine mechs.

Not only did it go deep into exploring the potential of the five elements theory, but it also blended the strengths of modern mech design and mystical cultivation science into a brilliant fusion!

Compared to the relatively practical but boring concept of Carmine mech dynasties, Ves felt much more passionate about pursuing the concept of elemental Carmine mechs to

the extreme!

He raised his head and looked straight up towards the Nanolord's private box. His eyes exuded a lot more certainty than before.

"The Carmine System that I have introduced to all of you now is only the most basic variant that I have created so far. It is not technically attributeless, but I can basically treat it as such." He explained to the Star Designer as well as the masses. "In my theoretical framework, the Carmine System is ripe for development in terms of E-energy attributes. The direction that I have chosen for the time being is to combine my invention with the five elements theory."

The mention of the five elements theory evoked a lot of unpleasant memories for the higher ups who were old enough to live through the aftermath of the Age of Conquest or inherited the Big Two's vigilance towards a cult that worshiped the aforementioned elements!

Ves was well aware how any allusions to the Five Scrolls Compact could trigger these old or overly paranoid bastards, but he was done with trying to tiptoe past their sensibilities. They had already tried to get in his way and expose his dirty laundry, so he had no reason to hold back anymore.

Fortunately, the Nanolord did not appear to react in a similar manner to the First Flame. His impeccable appearance remained unperturbed as if the five elements theory was just another scientific concept.

"How far have you advanced this line of research?" The Star Designer asked. "Are you still in the theory phase, or have you already begun to test your assumptions in practice?" Ves smiled. "I have gone past pure theory. I have tentatively confirmed the viability of developing elemental Carmine mechs based on the fire element and the wood element. I have most recently devised a concept of a metal Carmine mech based on the use of smart metal, though unlike the previous two instances, I have yet to obtain enough empirical proof that it can be realized in practice. I have yet to devise concrete ideas on how to realize Carmine mechs based on the water and earth elements, but it should only be a matter of time before I complete my basic framework. As long as I develop the corresponding elemental Carmine mechs and turn them into reality, I anticipate that my design philosophy will propel me to the rank of Master Mech Designer."

The Nanolord looked mildly impressed. "That is an intriguing line of research and one that merits the attention of a mech designer such as yourself. Do not take your ascension to Master for granted. Your theory is not completely tested, and your elemental Carmine mechs may turn out differently in reality. I can understand why you are so invested in this idea. The five elements are among the most common E energy attributes that we work with on a frequent basis, and they possess so much versatility that they can be applied in a wide variety of solutions. Combining two or more of the five elements together can produce unexpected synergies that can result in explosive performance, though often at the cost of catastrophic instability. If you can solve or mitigate this known issue through your elemental Carmine mechs, then your works will have a bright future in our mech industry."

That was an incredibly valuable vote of confidence from a Star Designer!

Ves felt a lot more certain and confident about pursuing this line of research. It had been worth it to disclose his idea to the Nanolord and the public.

Although Ves still had a tendency to keep his secrets, doing so caused others to grow

suspicious. It also cut him off from valid feedback, causing him to run around like a headless chicken who didn't know any better.

This time, an authoritative mech designer personally voiced his support and approval. This not only gave Ves greater confidence that he was working in the right direction, but also granted him a shield against many critics and paranoid adversaries that desired to shut down his research due to any potential associations with the dreaded Five Scrolls

Compact!

The only individuals that could persist in their opposition towards Ves' work were other tier 1 galactic citizens, but they should never bother with this under normal

circumstances.

Both Ves and the Nanolord implicitly understood what had happened. There was no

need for either of them to acknowledge this through any form of communication. It was enough that they knew.

Ves relaxed a bit. He was able to deduce from this exchange that the Nanolord harbored a slight amount of goodwill towards him. This was good news because he needed all of the friends that he could get. If a few of those friends just happened to be found in high places, then that was even better!

"You have my gratitude for answering my questions. Your plan on how you intend to develop your Carmine System further is ambitious. The upper limit of outcomes is high, and so are my expectations." The Nanolord eventually said. "Please resume your presentation. We are still awaiting your unveiling of your Carmine mech designs." Ves made a sincere bow as the Nanolord turned away just as the Star Designer's box

turned opaque again.

Many people in the audience still felt impressed that they witnessed an exchange between a rising star and a literal Star Designer.

For many of them, this was the first time they heard the speech of a legendary Star

Designer in person!

Ves looked as if he just concluded a talk with an ordinary mech designer. The way he was

able to maintain his composure after speaking to a legend of the mech industry raised people's evaluation of him even further.

It seemed as if Ves already possessed the demeanor of a bigshot! Ves calmly clapped his hands. "I only have time to address a handful more questions.

After I have satisfied your curiosity, I shall quickly proceed with unveiling the first. Carmine mechs that will be made available to the public."

Now that the public had learned a lot more about the nuances of the Carmine System, they developed a greater yearning towards the products that have yet to be announced. They wanted to observe a real Carmine mech in action! Only when they witnessed a real mech getting piloted by an actual norm would they fully become convinced that none of this was a fantasy!

Chapter 6398 Is It Still A Mech?

"Professor Larkinson, are Carmine mechs still mechs? I do not mean this as an insult to you and your work, but we have always been taught that a mech is unique from every other comparable machine because it is piloted by a human through the use of a neural interface. If the so-called Blood Pact works on completely different principles, then it should operate much differently from a traditional man-machine connection. Do Carmine mech pilots have to develop a completely new set of piloting skills in order to operate a machine through this Blood Pact?"

That was a rather interesting series of questions, and one that Ves felt the need to address before he was finally ready to unveil his products.

"You have presented us with an interesting philosophical subject matter." Ves spoke while he faced the speaker who had stood up from the stands. "I am personally of the opinion that Carmine mechs are not that different from mechs that can solely be operated with a neural interface. I do not think it is appropriate for us to use an overly narrow definition of mechs, as that will constrain our willingness to explore superior technological solutions. While I have yet to pilot a Carmine mech myself, I am told that many of the existing piloting skills transfer over when trying to control a machine through the Blood Pact. There is enough commonality between the usage of the two control systems. This is good news as conventional mech pilots who seek to obtain an edge can quickly adapt to the use of a Carmine System alongside a traditional neural interface without trying to operate both of them in completely different ways"

It would have been a nightmare if that was the case.

His answer provided a lot of interesting thought material to conventional mech pilots. While they welcomed the introduction of an alternate control system that gave them a backup option in case they incurred substantial brain damage in combat, they also felt mixed about the emergence of 'Carmine mech pilots'.

There was no way these norms could possibly fight as well as professional mech pilots, especially if they lacked the required training and education!

Fighting alongside Carmine mechs would probably lead to a lot of accidents and frustrations due to overenthusiastic amateurs messing around with war machines that they had little right to play around with. Whatever experience they accrued while piloting virtual mechs in their silly games, none of those experiences transferred well to real combat situations!

What about the long-term?

What if these Carmine mech pilots became good enough to rival conventional mech pilots or even replace them entirely?

Just the possibility that this could happen spooked a lot of conventional mech pilots! Would they be forced to bond with a single mech for the rest of their lives as well? Could they do anything to reject this rising trend?

The mech community needed to spend a lot of time on thinking and debating on the many issues that would inevitably arise once Carmine mechs became a part of the fabric of human society.

There was bound to be a lot of friction between regular mech pilots and Carmine mech pilots, but most people still possessed enough awareness that the native aliens were always supposed to be their real enemies.

After the question and answer session finally came to an end, Ves could finally proceed to introduce the results of the Swarm Project.

Ves grew more excited, and so did his fellow collaborators who remained silent all of the time.

He began to address his audience once more, knowing that he would not be speaking with almost every red human watching the historic broadcast, but also many more people in the future.

"The definition of mechs is an interesting topic of discussion, but a Carmine mech is still a mech as far as I am concerned. Now, I am well aware that many of you have been spending over an hour

listening to me introduce and describe the wonders of the Carmine System to you. I believe that you are ready and eager to witness a practical example of this innovative new control system in action."

The section of the podium behind him suddenly began to shift. A new hole had formed where a brand-new mech slowly emerged from below!

Although the dim lighting only caused the outline of the new machine to become visible, people already developed a huge amount of anticipation towards this groundbreaking Carmine mech.

"Actions speak louder than words." Ves firmly stated. "My collaborators and I can spend another hour explaining the strengths and properties of our works to you, but a practical demonstration will satisfy your curiosity much more than any verbal description."

The lighting directed towards the Carmine mech slowly began to brighten, allowing the masses to obtain an increasingly clearer glimpse of the long-awaited machine. The Carmine mech's appearance did not match people's expectations.

The long and slender shape, the lack of humanoid proportions, the bright yellow and deep black alternating stripes, the flight system that vaguely resembled wings and the insectile limbs all made it clear that this was an insectoid mech!

"This is the third-class edition of the Yellow Jacket. There is also a second-class and first-class edition that will be introduced later. Ves introduced as he perceived people's confusion about the unconventional design of the Carmine mech. "As one of the three initial Carmine mechs available to the public, my design team and I have taken into account that the initial users will be enthusiasts who cannot wait and wish to qualify for

combat as soon as possible. We have therefore decided to prioritize cost and simplicity. The Yellow Jacket is a wasp mech that is designed to function as an affordable frontline mech that is easy to learn, but still possesses a certain degree of depth. The use of modular components for the 6 hardpoints that are normally taken up by limbs can give their owners the option of dynamically changing their loadouts to fit the circumstances." Though Ves was already starting to lecture about the Carmine mech, what he shared was vital information that should cut off a lot of confusion and misconceptions about the Yellow Jacket.

Many mech insiders instantly understood the positioning of the Yellow Jacket model. Carmine mech or not, it was just an insectoid frontline mech that used a modular hardpoint system to achieve more versatility and customizability.

It was actually a thoughtful introduction of the Carmine System to red humanity. While the Yellow Jacket obviously offered very little of interest to conventional mech pilots, they should serve as a very easy introduction to piloting actual mechs.

At the very least, the inherent simplicity and lack of complications should make it so that Carmine mech pilots had less ways to screw up and cause a catastrophe! "Alright, now that you have laid your eyes on the first commercial Carmine mech, I would now like to ask for a volunteer among you to come up to this podium, enter the cockpit and form a Blood Pact with this Yellow Jacket so that you may prove once and for all that the Carmine System is not a figment of anyone's imagination. Soon enough, each of you will receive access to a new portal where you can submit your willingness to bond yourself to this third-class mech. In order to make this demonstration convincing enough, we will only accept applications from norms whose genetic aptitudes are confirmed to be unqualified."

A short moment of silence ensued before a lot of people began to discuss this exciting possibility!

There were many people who expressed interest in piloting a Carmine mech, but completely disdained to sully themselves with an inferior third-class product that was clearly aimed towards the bottom of the pyramid.

There were also other people that wanted to claim the honor and fame of becoming the first person to convert into a Carmine pilot in full view of red humanity, and signed up at

the first chance!

While the seconds passed, many mech pilots and mech designers already began to analyze the visible design elements of the Yellow Jacket and deduce its properties.

There were a lot of clever, experienced and insightful mech designers who instantly dissected much of the essence of the Yellow Jacket and gained a fairly complete thorough of the mech design!

Ves did not mind this behavior. Third-class mechs did not have much room for complexity to begin with, and the Yellow Jacket was never meant to be great. It was not

that complicated of a machine once he stripped out the Carmine System.

Once the people attending the product reveal in person had submitted their applications, a projection of a random selection program came into view.

The program began to execute its task. A large number of individual names began to scroll at a dizzying speed.

Slowly, the scrolling speed slowed down, allowing people to read the names more clearly.

As the metaphorical wheel gradually stagnated even further, it finally stopped at a single name.

[JACOB ABBOTT]

Many people groaned and expressed their regret at missing this historic selection!

They had all missed the chance to become a part of history!

As for the lucky individual who was bound to become a household name, a 31-year man stood up from the stands as soon as a spotlight shone on his position.

His body automatically floated up in the air before it gently flew over to the podium.

Once his body lowered to a position next to Ves, Jacob Abbott looked like he was doing a decent job at keeping in his excitement!

"Jacob Abbott." Ves addressed the lucky individual that had truly been selected at random. "Would you like to introduce yourself to everyone? Please keep it short." "Ah, Yes, professor! I am Jacob Abbott. I am a citizen of the Independent State of Roye in

the Liebhart Upper Zone. I am 31 years old, and I am currently employed as an

Apprentice Mech Designer."

An Apprentice Mech Designer!

That was an incredibly interesting candidate!

There was no way that Jacob was a potentate or received professional piloting training,

or else he wouldn't have chosen to become a mech designer!

A lot of other mech designers grew eager. They seemed to substitute themselves in

Jacob's shoes.

If a mech designer like him could successfully pilot a Carmine mech, then there was no reason that other mech designers would fail!

"Before I let you try out the Yellow Jacket, please answer the following questions. First,

do you have any piloting, combat or martial training?"

"No." Jacob shook his head. "I have only completed a short mandatory weapons training

course. That is the extent of my combat training."

"Have you ever played virtual reality games where you can control virtual mechs?"

"Yes. I played those games for years in my youth, but I gradually quit because my studies consumed much of my time."

"What is your genetic aptitude?"

"F" Jacob spoke without any shame.

"We would like to verify that just to make it clear to everyone that this is genuinely the case."

"Please feel free to do so, professor,"

A pair of mechers approached from the rear. They held a strange apparatus in their hands. Once they came close enough, they carefully fit it over the head of the candidate.

The machine soon spat out a clear result.

[GENETIC APTITUDE: F]

"Good. Now that we have learned that your record is accurate on this, you may proceed to enter the cockpit of the Yellow Jacket."

Jacob needed no more encouragement. He listened to Ves' brief instructions and began to float towards the rear of the dormant Carmine mech.

Just as the entrance to the cockpit opened, Jacob became greeted by an unexpected

sight that caused him to recoil in instinctive disgust!

"What is this?! Is this a biomech?!"

Hints of organic components became visible under the metal plating now that the cockpit opened up its entrance.

Ves smiled. "Oh, I forgot to mention that all 3 editions of the Yellow Jacket are actually

cyborg mechs. Each of them partially consist of organic parts that extend beyond the Carmine System. There are good reasons for this that I will explain after we have concluded this demonstration. For now, please proceed if you are willing to continue,

Jacob."

The first-class Apprentice Mech Designer had never come into contact with biotechnology before, but he quickly managed to suppress his disgust reaction. He held his breath and decisively entered the cockpit!

Chapter 6399 The First Yellow Jacket

How could it be so easy to convince people that the Carmine System worked?

No matter how much Ves explained and no matter how extensively the Red Association backed up his words, there were still far too many people who remained unconvinced that his invention worked.

It was unreasonable to completely change a person's long-standing opinion and belief on a very important and controversial issue over the course of a single lecture.

The topic of genetic aptitude had long embedded itself deep into the psyche of humans. From Ves' perspective, it was not just a biological property, but a totemic existence that cast a tall shadow on people's minds.

Such an existence could never be defeated by mere words.

In order to completely dispel the public's doubts and convince them with hard proof that the Carmine System was the real deal, a live demonstration was necessary.

Right now, many people paid close attention to Jacob Abbott and whether he could successfully interface with the Yellow Jacket.

As Ves stepped away, he had to keep his breath under control. His sharp senses detected a significantly greater flow of faith energy.

A lot of people felt so strongly about this issue that they literally prayed for the Yellow Jacket to form a successful Blood Pact with Jacob Abbot and allow him to pilot the Carmine mech perfectly!

The amount of people who held this earnest hope was so massive that the quantity of faith energy was massive.

Almost no one at the Palace of Mechanical Marvels should have been able to perceive this enormous flow of faith energy aside from the Nanolord and maybe other True Gods who happened to be present.

Ves once again lamented the enormous waste of faith energy.

There had to be a way to effectively channel this faith energy into a mech or other object. Ves refused to believe that people hadn't figured out a way to utilize this potent energy. It may even be the secret that allowed Star Designers to create their impressive grand works.

Unfortunately, Ves did not have a chance to manipulate faith energy properly until he finally became a True God himself. He could only wait for it all to flow by without having any chance of putting it to good use.

By this time, Jacob Abbot had already strapped himself into his strange seat.

As an Apprentice Mech Designer, the first-rater had designed his fair share of mechs, though he wasn't successful enough to sell his products to many customers.

He knew quite well what a cockpit was supposed to look like and what elements it should contain.

The interior of the Yellow Jacket was far from what he was used to. The Carmine mech was designed according to third-class standards, so it did not feature a lot of complexity to begin with. The subsequent efforts of the mech designers to simplify the control interfaces even further caused the cockpit to lack a lot of buttons and screens that was usually present in more standard machines.

Jacob recognized that this was a very deliberate attempt to dumb down the operation of the Yellow Jacket as much as possible. The design team clearly did not hold a good opinion about the typical users of this mech, and tried to make it so that even a dummy who had not read any manuals would know how to pull off basic operations.

"Mr. Abbott?" The voice of Ves sounded from a newly opened communication channel. "Please respond if you can hear this. Your voice will be broadcast to everyone."

"I am strapped inside the cockpit, Professor Larkinson. What is the next step?" "Well, if you have paid attention to my earlier lecture, then you should know that as soon as you activate the Carmine mech, needles will poke through your body in order to start the shared blood circulation process. Please be reassured that the synthetic blood used by the Carmine mech is extremely compatible with a wide variety of physiques. Your body has already been tested to verify that your body will not suffer any major rejection reactions. The initial process may feel painful and uncomfortable, but you must not let that distract you from forming a Blood Pact with your new machine."

"How... how do I form a Blood Pact with this mech?" Jacob questioned.

"I cannot describe it. Words can never fully convey the magic of the Blood Pact. All I can say is that as long as you are sincere in bonding yourself to this mech for the rest of your life, you will instinctively take the initiative to accept the formation of the Blood Pact." When Jacob thought that he could only ever pilot a single Carmine mech in his life, he couldn't help but grow a little nervous.

"You told before that Carmine mechs can be upgraded at all times. I will not have to keep this living mech at third-class, correct?"

"I can completely assure you that this is possible." Ves said. "The Shield of Samar started out as a third-class standard mech, and steadily evolved into a second-class expert mech while still maintaining her original identity. If she hadn't fallen by now, she might have been able to become a first-class ace mech."

Now that Jacob received a clear answer on this subject, he had no more doubts.

He did not need to receive any instructions to activate the machine. He pressed the big red button that presented itself in the middle of the forward console.

Soon enough, the Yellow Jacket started to hum. Her systems methodically came online while AI programs performed routine inspections to make sure that everything was in order.

Once the basic checks were complete, the cockpit suddenly tightened its grip on Jacob's body and began to inject needles into his veins from various different positions. Though Jacob expected it to happen, he still let out a squeal when he finally felt the needles poking through his cloths and directly through his skin!

Then, he immediately began to experience the very weird sensation of feeling his blood getting sucked out of a few tubes while more blood entered his bloodstream from other tubes.

The strangest part about this weird experience was that Jacob could not only briefly track the blood that was siphoned out of his body, but also had a very clear experience that the synethic blood that entered his body did not belong in this place!

A brief sense of repulsion ran through Jacob's mind. He feared that if this process continued, his body would completely be filled with this false and foreign blood that did

not feel quite good!

It was then that the Yellow Jacket reached out to Jacob. It was a completely different

existence.

Jacob actually didn't know what to expect from a living mech.

When he tentatively made contact with the strange machine, he found that living mech

was not as cold an inorganic as he expected.

Even though the living mech most definitely felt inhuman, it did not harbor sense of hostility towards humans at all. This was a machine imparted with a bit of consciousness and a strong desire to fulfill its purpose of serving its destined mech pilot!

Now that Jacob had interfaced with the Yellow Jacket for the first time, the living mech eagerly wanted to fulfill its purpose!

As the two continued to come into contact with each other, they gained enough of an impression of their potential partners to decide whether they want to go through with

forming a Blood Pact.

Both sides agreed.

The two had formed a sacred covenant.

Even without exchanging any words or signing any contracts, both man and machine had formed an implicit but ironclad agreement.

Their very spiritualities had made a mutual promise to each other! Both of them would fight alongside each other for the rest of their lives!

As the Blood Pact came into existence, the shared blood that flowed through the veins of both parties seemed to gain more energy!

"I... can feel it! I can feel the mech coming under my sway!" Jacob spoke in an exhilarating and uncontrollable way! "My senses are expanding! My perspective has changed! I am so much taller than before! It... it is actually starting to become too much! All of this input, all of these senses, all of these status indicators, it is too overwhelming!" Though Jacob Abbott successfully managed to form a Blood Pact, he was not a professional mech pilot. He had no idea how to handle the input he received from his

new machine.

Ves already anticipated this consequence. He could have chosen to restrict the Yellow Jacket's systems and shut down a lot of unessential systems in advance, but he declined to do so because it wouldn't be authentic enough.

He had confidence that his work would allow the new Carmine mech pilot to quickly acclimatize to his new condition.

"Calm down, Jacob. What you are perceiving is the data input comparable to what a typical third-class mech pilot receives from his machine. Do not try to process the data, but let it flow right past you. Do not take the initiative to accept it as your mind cannot handle it all at once without proper instruction. Just imagine yourself taking a few steps back. You want to distance yourself from your Carmine mech without completely relinquishing all of your awareness and control."

The instructions helped to stabilize the new Carmine mech pilot. The Apprentice Mech Designer did not truly know what it was like to pilot a mech, but he heard enough descriptions to roughly understand what he needed to do to gain control. Once Jacob was able to find a way to deal with the influx of data, he was finally able to breathe a little easier. He was no longer at risk of getting overwhelmed.

"I... am ready for your next instruction, professor." "Alright. Now, your Yellow Jacket is currently armed with a variety of third-class weapons, so do not worry about accidental discharges. Our defensive systems can easily block the attacks. Before you do anything with your weapon systems, let us start with the basics first. Since the Yellow Jacket is a wasp mech that is primarily designed for space combat, let us test your ability to fly and maneuver in the air. Please activate the flight system and produce enough lift to rise from the floor."

The Apprentice Mech Designer did not ask for more detailed instructions. He became determined to figure it out by himself. He thought about the flight system, and his living mech helped to navigate the unfamiliar control system until he was able to change the

operation of the flight system.

The Yellow Jacket steadily rose in the air. It did so at a slow but constant pace as if Jacob was afraid he would generate too much lift and cause the priceless Carmine mech to

smack into the ceiling!

"I have, I mean my mech has lifted off the floor, sir." "Alright, now I want you to navigate. Try to follow this simple route."

A line projected in the air that made gentle turns and even looped around a few times. The exhibition hall offered more than enough space for the machine to maneuver.

At first, the Yellow Jacket moved slowly and shakily. Jacob was not used to this at all and was not able to maintain stable control over his machine.

This became evident as the Yellow Jacket either sped up too much or slowed to a crawl.

It was also really bad at making turns as it always deviated from the line because it turned too sharply or did not do so strong enough!

In fact, the performance of the Yellow Jacket was downright painful and embarrassing to

many mech pilots!

They hadn't witnessed such awful performance since their first days at the mech

academy!

Yet it was exactly because the performance of the Yellow Jacket was so bad that made it

so convincing!

For all intents and purposes, Jacob piloted his Carmine mech exactly like any other

untrained mech cadet that entered into the cockpit of a mech for the first time!

"It is real... it is actually real..."

"I can't believe it. I still cannot believe that a norm has taken over my job!"

"IT IS ALL LIES! THIS ENTIRE BROADCAST IS FAKE! WHO IS SICK ENOUGH TO GIVE ME FALSE HOPE?! THERE IS NO WAY THAT THIS IS REAL!"

The previously rock solid beliefs and assumptions of a population that had been brutalized by the genetic aptitude tyranny for so long had finally begun to crumble for

real!

Chapter 6400 The Revolution Has Begun!

The product reveal of the Yellow Jacket was supposed to be a straightforward introduction of an innovative new mech model.

Compared to other mechs, the Yellow Jacket came with a range of new technological solutions.

A good mech design did not necessarily have to introduce completely new tech, but it at least had to introduce a new configuration of features that brought more value to the mech market.

The Yellow Jacket did that and more.

The live demonstration of the first Yellow Jacket continued. The machine, which had been built without the inclusion of a neural interface at all, began to perform a range of basic actions that tested the pilot's ability to control the wasp mech.

So far, Jacob Abbott managed to get his machine to follow a flight trajectory through crude and unskilled means.

It took a bit of time for him to figure out how to raise or lower the altitude of his Yellow Jacket, but he couldn't do so while moving forward or backwards at the same time.

Activating the modular weapon systems on the Yellow Jacket also turned into a struggle. The simplest loadout would be to mount it with nothing or just one single modular

weapon.

Ves had descended to eschew that and slot a different system into all 6 hardpoints.

This decision vastly increased the burden and complexity of controlling the Yellow Jacket. If Jacob Abbott was not an Apprentice Mech Designer who already possessed at least a few ideas on how mech pilots controlled their machines with their minds, he may have remained stuck in the absence of further instruction!

Even so, it still took around 4 minutes of fumbling and accidental discharges for him to tentatively figure out how to command a specific weapon module to open fire.

One of the distinctively designed modular gauss guns fired a special projectile that created a burst of shrapnel that should be good at eliminating small and fast targets. Another gauss gun fired a solid slug that exploded upon impact.

A third hardpoint mounted with a laser gun fired a modestly powered laser beam that possessed a high firing rate.

Another hardpoint was not mounted with a weapon system at all, but instead held an additional scanning array that was able to conduct powerful short-range directional

scans.

All of this versatility seemed fairly notable on a third-class budget mech, but the problem was that the aiming of these systems was far off the mark!

None of the guns hit their targets!

Despite presenting a completely stationary target dummy right in front of the Yellow Jacket, the mech exhibited such poor control and stability that it never managed to hit its target once!

Even the gauss gun loaded with shrapnel rounds failed to achieve a single hit despite the generous usage conditions of this ammunition type!

If this was a normal product reveal where Ves merely attempted to introduce a normal frontline mech designed to raise the standards of cannon fodder, then he and his work would have attracted a lot of ridicule!

Either his Yellow Jacket was so badly designed that a pilot could not exert proper control over it, or the test pilot he selected to hold this demonstration was so incompetent that it was a miracle that he managed to graduate from a mech academy!

No one was laughing.

Not a single person among the audience had expressed any contempt or ridicule at a display that should never happen beyond the first month of classes at a mech academy. This was because they all knew that the Yellow Jacket was not a dysfunctional mech, and that Jacob Abbott bore no fault for lacking any real piloting skills.

This disgraceful display was no laughing matter at all. Instead, it represented a miracle that far too many people had prayed for, yet never managed to witness since the start of the Age of Mechs.

For the first time since mechs became a human obsession, the masses finally witnessed with their very own eyes that it was truly possible for a norm to pilot a mech with their minds!

Even if the control system was completely different from a neural interface, it didn't matter to these people anymore because the approach towards piloting seemed similar enough!

"This is truly real... is it? Please wake me up from this dream if this is false."

"How... how can this be? How does this even work? What are the principles of this Blood Pact?"

"So this is our hierarch's great ploy. By gifting red humanity the ability to pilot mechs without regard for genetic aptitude, he gain the overwhelming support and goodwill of the masses on the eve of the founding of the Red Collective. Once he concludes this event, he will become unstoppable."

The Yellow Jacket continued to demonstrate a few more features, though Jacob Abbott. struggled to execute the more advanced and convoluted instructions. There were several instances where he failed to pull an action, but nobody minded his bumbling performance.

In an exhibition hall that was filled with millions of demanding critics, no one expressed

any sort of blame or rebuke towards the Carmine mech pilot.

Instead, they harbored great respect for Jacob Abbott for being able to control the Yellow Jacket to this extent with no piloting experience and a complete lack of familiarity in this mech model!

Once the demonstration had come to an end, Ves slowly instructed the pilot to settle Yellow Jacket and deactivate the machine.

down

To be honest, Jacob did not want to disengage from his machine at all. His mind entered a high that never seemed to end! Not only had he managed to fulfill his cherished childhood wish of becoming a 'mech pilot, but he also bared open his soul to that of another entity for the first time!

The Blood Pact was far more than a channel for data transmission. It was a sacred covenant that represented the permanent bond of trust and camaraderie between two

like-minded beings.

Though Jacob should have felt weirded out by the fact that he had bonded his soul with that of a machine, the experience was so euphoric that he simply could not generate any thoughts of ill-will towards his well-meaning Carmine mech!

Sadly, all good things must come to an end.

The product reveal had to continue. Jacob knew that he would have other opportunities to pilot his new Carmine mech. Now that he had bonded with this Yellow Jacket, it had already become his machine. He trusted that the designer of this groundbreaking mech would never try to deprive him from his new partner.

"Let us take a break." He said as he finally initiated the simplified shutdown procedure. The third-class Yellow Jacket slowly powered down. All of its weapon systems got locked and secured while its power reactor entered into its lowest state.

The entrance of the cockpit slid open. Jacob struggled to regain his wits as he slowly floated out of the cockpit.

His smart clothing had already closed the tiny gaps where the needles had pierced in order to connect the blood tubes to his veins. Careful application of medicines and other substances ensured that Jacob did not experience any pain or suffered any serious health issues due to replacing much of his blood with a synthetic version.

"Come over here, Mr. Abbott.." Ves beckoned.

The first-class Apprentice Mech Designer did as instructed. He slowly managed to pull himself out of his wondrous daze by the time his shoes touched the podium.

"Everyone here has witnessed your first attempt at piloting the Yellow Jacket." Ves spoke. "What are your first impressions, Mr. Abbott?"

"It is... magical" Jacob gasped. "I cannot describe it. I dare not ruin this experience for all of the norms that want to pilot a mech like this themselves. I only dare to say that it is worth it. Even this simple third-class mech is a joy to pilot because it has made me feel

larger and more awesome than ever before. I do not have the qualifications to tell everyone whether my experience is identical to piloting mechs with a neural interface, but I suspect it may be due to the load on my brain."

The new Carmine mech pilot nursed his head as if he was still suffering a headache.

"According to the readings of your Yellow Jacket, your brain has indeed endured far greater strain than it has typically withstood in the past." Ves explained to Jacob and his audience. "Piloting a mech remains data intensive. That hasn't changed from conventional mechs. Potentates are much better predisposed to endure this level of strain over long periods of time, particularly when they are still young and malleable. Any mech pilot that chooses to pilot a mech that is equipped with a Carmine System will not experience anything that they cannot handle. They have an inherent advantage in this

aspect.

That caused a lot of norms to grow a little disappointed. Did Ves imply that the genetic aptitude tyranny still managed to retain its existence?

"Are norms not entirely suitable to pilot Carmine mechs?" Jacob asked. "Norms are not advised to pilot Carmine mechs under challenging conditions without a long period of practice and conditioning. Long piloting sessions, complex configurations, and continuous high-intensity actions will massively increase the load on your brain and may induce permanent damage as a result. For safety reasons, every Carmine mech will monitor the load on the brain and give out plenty of warning signals if you approach the danger threshold. The owner of the Carmine mech can even activate a setting that will forcibly shut the machine down if serious brain damage is imminent."

This made a lot of sense. Conventional mech pilots also had to worry about how much

load their brains could endure. Pilots with inferior genetic aptitudes could not pilot second-class or third-class mechs at all without getting overwhelmed by the excessive amount of data throughput!

Still, many people did not mind this problem too much. The most important part was that they managed to get their foot in their door. Now that they finally unlocked the ability to pilot a mech, it did not matter that they had to start with the most simple and weakest forms of mechs!

As long as they trained their skills and conditioned their brains to handle the data throughput, they were hopeful that they would one day be able to pilot Carmine mechs that resembled the prime combat machines that often showed up on the frontlines!

After Ves clarified a few more issues, he decided to move on to the proper product introduction phase.

He clapped the lucky volunteer on the back. "Thank you for your cooperation, Mr. Abbott. This third-class Yellow Jacket is completely yours. My assistant has already transferred its ownership to your name. You can upgrade it yourself or let others do the job. You can also keep it in its current condition, though I can imagine that your new partner will not like that decision. Remember that you are not dealing with a lifeless object. You are partnered yourself with a living mech that can think and feel. You should at least treat it as a loving pet. So take care of it and reciprocate its trust. This Yellow

Jacket can become far more than a trophy in your life. Do you understand your new responsibility?"

The Apprentice Mech Designer seriously nodded.

"I will never mistreat the partner that has allowed me to fulfill my dream of piloting a mech. I will cherish it and make sure it remains happy under my care."

"You do not have to coddle it and lock it away in your deepest vault. Mechs are made for the purpose of waging war, and this Yellow Jacket is no different. If it is necessary, your living machine is willing to die for your cause."

"Then let us hope that never happens."

After Jacob and his new Yellow Jacket got moved from the podium, Ves attracted everyone's attention.

Three new Yellow Jackets emerged from the floor behind him. One of them was identical to the previous machine, but the other two models were clearly a lot more powerful and sophisticated! "Everyone." Ves addressed the audience. "Now that you have obtained unquestionable proof that the Carmine System works exactly as described, I hope that you can finally accept that we have entered into a new epoch of mechs. Each of you are blessed to live through this transition. People in the future will speak of mechs in a time before and after the introduction of the Carmine System. The genetic aptitude tyranny that has cast a specter over every human's heart has been toppled by my invention! You are free now!

Each of you have gained the ability to pilot a mech! Let us celebrate this liberation and welcome the arrival of a new revolution! A Carmine Revolution!"

The Carmine Revolution!

This phrase instantly captured the imagination of the masses! Already, trillions of people whispered or shouted this compelling combination of words throughout every corner of human-occupied space!

The Carmine Revolution had overtaken the mech community and human civilization as a

whole!

The entire dwarf galaxy seemed to turn a little more red due to the outbreak of this bloodless revolution!